


Claim 2. (Amended) A photothermographic material comprising a support having provided on at least one side thereof a photosensitive silver halide, a photo-insensitive organic silver salt, a reducing agent for silver ion and a binder, wherein at least one layer constituting said photothermographic material comprises an oxazoline compound, wherein said oxazoline compound is a compound having two or more 2-oxazolyl groups represented by the following formula (1) in the molecule,



wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 each independently represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an aryl group, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 each does not independently represent a hydrogen atom at the same time, and the alkyl group or the aryl group may have a substituent.

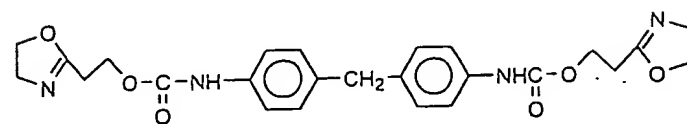
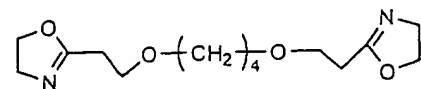
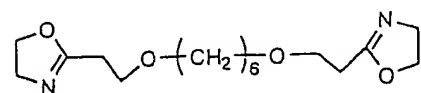
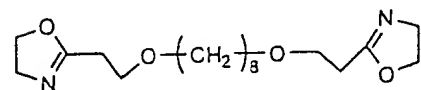
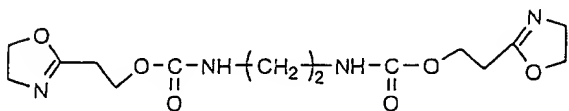
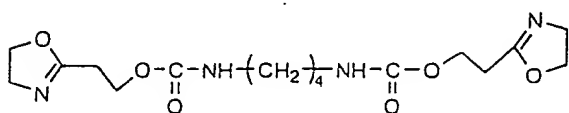
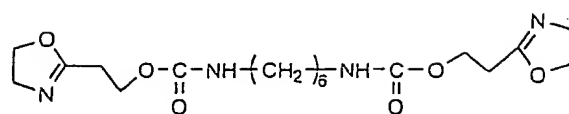
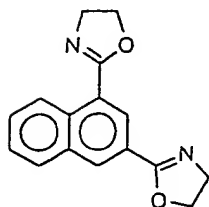
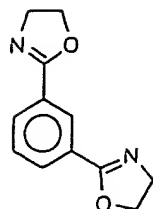
Please add the following new claims:

--6. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 2, wherein the oxazoline compound is a low molecular weight compound having two or more 2-oxazolyl groups further comprising an organic connecting group between the two 2-oxazolyl groups.

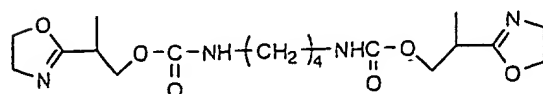
 7. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 6, wherein the connecting group comprises di- or poly-valent aromatic hydrocarbon groups having 6 to 20 carbon atoms, di- or poly-valent aliphatic hydrocarbon groups having 1 to 20 carbon atoms, and combinations of these with -O- or -C(=O)NH-.

8. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 7, wherein the organic connecting group is selected from the group consisting of a p-phenylene group, an m-phenylene group, a 1,3-naphthylene group, an ethylene group, a butylene group, a xylene group, an octylene group, a 1,2,3-propanetolyl group, a 1,3-propanediyl-2-ilydene group, and $-\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{O}(\text{C}=\text{O})\text{NH}-(\text{CH}_2)_n-\text{NH}(\text{C}=\text{O})\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2-$ (wherein n is 2, 4 or 6).


9. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 6, wherein the low molecular weight compound containing two or more 2-oxazolyl groups is selected from the group consisting of:



and




10. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 3, wherein the polymer comprises a recurring unit having a 2-oxazolyl group in the side chain thereof which is obtained by homopolymerizing a monomer unit containing a 2-oxazolyl group or copolymerizing said monomer with other monomer unit(s) copolymerizable with the 2-oxazolyl group-containing monomer.

 11. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 10, wherein the polymers resulting from the homopolymerization or copolymerization of a monomer represented by the following formula (2) are used alone or in combination with another monomer:



wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 each independently represents a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group or an aryl group, wherein R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^4 each does not independently represent a hydrogen atom at the same time, and the alkyl group or the aryl group may have a substituent, and R^5 represents an organic group having an unsaturated bond that can undergo addition polymerization.

12. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 11, wherein the monomers are selected from the group consisting of 2-vinyl-2-oxazoline, 2-vinyl-4-methyl-2-oxazoline, 2-vinyl-5-ethyl-2-oxazoline, 2-isopropenyl-2-oxazoline, 2-isopropenyl-4-methyl-2-oxazoline, 2-isopropenyl-4-ethyl-2-oxazoline and 2-propenyl-4-ethyl-2-oxazoline.



13. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 12, wherein the monomers are selected from the group consisting of 2-vinyl-2-oxazoline and 2-isopropenyl-2-oxazoline, and these monomers can be used in combination of two or more.

14. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of the oxazoline compound is in a range of 0.5 to 200% by weight of the binder for the constitution layer in which the compound is incorporated.

15. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the organic silver salt is present in an amount between 0.1 and 5 g/m².

16. The photothermographic material as claimed in claim 1, wherein the amount of the photosensitive silver halide is, in terms of the coated amount of silver per 1 m² of the material, from 0.03 to 0.6 g/m² relative to 1 mole of the organic silver salt, or the photosensitive silver halide is present in an amount from 0.01 to 0.5 mole.--

REMARKS

Rejection of Claims 1, 4 and 5 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) Over U.S. Patent 4,562,143 to Hirabayashi et al. and Rejection of Claims 2 and 3 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) Over U.S. Patent 4,562,143 to Hirabayashi et al. In View of U.S. Patent 5,955,251 to Koyama et al. (Paragraphs 1-3 of Office Action)

Claims 1, 4 and 5 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,562,143 to Hirabayashi et al. for the reasons set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. Claims 2 and 3 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,562,143 to Hirabayashi et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,955,251 to Koyama et al. for the reasons set forth in paragraph 3 of the Office Action. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Reconsideration and withdrawal thereof are requested.